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ABSTRACT

To facilitate resource sharing, a union list of serials held by libraries in Oakland County, Michigan, was compiled. A steering committee representing the special, academic, and public libraries in the county planned the project. Special arrangements were made to eliminate such barriers to special library participation as: lack of staff for special projects, limited public access to special library collections, and lack of standardization in serial records. It was discovered that serial resources in the community were greater than anticipated and that the vast majority of entries were unique--held by just one library. (PF)

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SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION: THE PROBLEMS OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC ACCESS

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Interlibrary cooperative networks and systems generate a demand for bibliographic access tools. If a group of librarians or libraries adhere to the basic concept of networks, that of exhausting local resources before seeking unmet needs elsewhere, then there must be bibliographic access tools which can identify for the participants what is available locally and elsewhere. However, bibliographic access tools for local resources have historically been unavailable. Tools such as the Library of Congress Union Catalogs and the Union List of Serials have functioned in the role of identifying major resources at the national level. Usually, major research institutions or collections at state levels have book catalogs or union lists of total or selected holdings. But even at the state level there are voids; often bibliographic access tools that one assumes should exist do not.

At local levels there are usually no bibliographic access tools at all. The larger individual units may publish only what are contained in their serials collections. Rarely does one find a book catalog. Interloan networks on local levels, and sometimes even on state levels, often have to function without any knowledge of where materials are located, resulting in a large expense of time, money, and manpower.

The focus of this presentation is on the problems, both actual and

projected, encountered by special library units in participating in a project designed to create a union list of serials for special, public, and academic library units at a local level. The LOCULS (Librarians for an Oakland County Union List of Serials) project was designed to create a countywide union list of serials that included all library units in Oakland County, Michigan. The project started with no formal organizational structure, some professional opposition at the local level to any project that dealt with networks or cooperative efforts, and no funding. We would conjecture that this model exists universally when any new project begins to be formulated.

The LOCULS project began as an idea in February of 1974 and was successfully completed in the Winter of 1975 with the publication of the Oakland County Union List of Serials. In that time it achieved its goal of creating a locally-oriented bibliographic access tool, gained an organizational structure, got the needed funding for its publication, and perhaps tempered opposition to the concept of a network project in the county. Problems did exist and problems still are present. However, the success of the project can best be summed up by its ability to anticipate and handle the problems, economic, social, political, and technical, which were present before the LOCULS project existed, and to overcome them.

Before the LOCULS project was proposed, or even had a name, a core group of librarians representing all types of library units met informally to discuss the feasibility of creating a union list of serials. Given all the factors - political, social, and economic - within the community, the decision to stop talking and to do it was made.

AXIOM 1 A DECISION TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT AN UNMET NEED MUST BE MADE. TALKING MUST STOP. ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.

Once the decision to have a countywide union list was made and a proposal formulated, a LOCULS Steering Committee was created consisting of librarians representing the special, academic, and public library units in the county. Their function was to act in an advisory capacity and to address themselves to how the union list would be generated and what shape it would take. The varied input and perspectives of the different interest groups at initial planning stages was desirable to prevent problems which might occur at later stages of development. The specific concerns of the special librarians who constituted a large percentage of the Steering Committee were voiced at this stage and some procedures were altered or redesigned as a response to these concerns.

AXIOM 2 IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL UNITS BE REPRESENTED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF PLANNING SO THAT PREVENTATIVE STEPS MAY BE TAKEN TO AVOID PROBLEMS DISTINCT TO EACH UNIT.

The co-authors agreed to take upon themselves the responsibility of editing and compiling the union list. Following the recommendations of the Steering Committee, a formal proposal and plan for the project was drawn up and mailed to every library in the county. Our parent institution, the largest library unit in the county, agreed to supply the cost of the forms to be used in conveying the data to the editors, and the initial data base of its 4500 periodicals was set up at the library. In this way, the Oakland County Union List of Serials became an actual ongoing project which we could ask other libraries to participate in.

AXIOM 3 FUNDING AND COOPERATION COME MORE READILY TO EXISTING PROJECTS THAN TO THEORITICAL ONES. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.

Once the plans were mailed out to every library, the actual work of

compilation, and of convincing the individual libraries to participate began. Many of the libraries, particularly the special ones, voiced concern and even opposition to the concept of the union list. Their objections or problems were solved by the editors responding directly to each individual unit's needs and special circumstances. This individual treatment succeeded because our methods of compilation were adaptable to the particular collections internal methods of recording periodical holdings.

AXIOM 4 METHODS MUST BE FLEXIBLE IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE VARIANCES OF LIBRARIES AND THEIR RECORDS KEEPING.

The basic problems that arose when the special libraries became actively involved in our cooperative project are applicable to many other types of network of interlibrary cooperative programs which special libraries might involve themselves with. The problems, with the corresponding response of the editors, are outlined below. The solutions came through personal contact between the editors and the participating libraries, whether over the telephone, through open meetings to which all librarians were invited, or by visits of one of the editors to the libraries themselves. This leads us to conclude:

AXIOM 5 THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL CONTACT. MOST PROBLEMS CAN BE WORKED OUT ONCE LIBRARIANS MEET FACE TO FACE.

SPECIAL LIBRARY CONCERNS	EDITORS' RESPONSE
1. The special library felt that its limited manpower resources would make it difficult to participate in the project.	1. The editors provided a professional volunteer to meet manpower needs.
2. The special library was often concerned that making its resources known would necessitate open access to its collection for the general public.	2. An access agreement was designed for all participant in the project. This set minimum standards for access in that each library defined its own mode of access and fixed any special restrictio

SPECIAL LIBRARY CONCERNS	EDITORS' RESPONSE
3. The problem of accessability to the collection due to restricted hours, lack of staff, and/or the closed nature of the parent institution of the special library, was a major question.	3. Each library was provided with a form to be included in the Union List which stated hours of access, named a contact person, whether a patron needed to call before coming to use the collection, gave charges for copies, etc., so that any user of the Union List would be cognizant of the problems involved.
4. The possible costs of participating in the project worried many libraries. They felt they could not afford the cost of the forms for the input of data, or the usual costs of interloan.	4. The parent institution of the editors provided forms free of charge. We indicated the long-term and short-term cost benefits of the project, such as preventing duplication of collections. The individual unit could also, under the definition of minimal access, charge the user for any direct costs incurred.
5. The special libraries had non-standardized methods of keeping periodical records, and felt this would make it difficult to feed in the information on their serials to the project.	5. We used a standardized input form which was flexible enough to be used by all units, no matter what their methods of record-keeping were.
6. Some libraries had no records of periodicals at all, and had no idea what gaps were present in their holdings.	6. The editors entered as holdings of the unit whatever was found on the shelf at the time of compilation. We devised a way to desiginate incomplete holdings only.
7. Special library collections tended to contain only current issues of limited back runs.	7. We devised a scheme for designating entries with current holdings only.
8. The special libraries often did not have complete bibliographic data on those periodicals which they did own, or else were reluctant to spend the time completing the input forms in their entirety.	8. The editors used the bibliographic tools available at their library to do the bibliographic verification for the libraries. They allowed for only a minimum of information to be put in by the individual units.

SPECIAL LIBRARY CONCERNS	EDITORS' RESPONSE
9. The libraries often displayed a lack of awareness of interlibrary loans as a concept and as a process.	9. We made personal contacts to explain the advantages of the project, and to increase the awareness among the special libraries of interlibrary loan service and existing systems within the area. We held group meetings in a number of local libraries to introduce ourselves and explain the project. When necessary, we made personal visits to individual units.

As the Oakland County Union List of Serials began to take shape, and individual units' holdings were entered into the master data base, certain trends began to emerge.

- The assumption that local units' collections would strongly duplicate each other was invalid. The vast majority of entries were unique - held by only one library. Even where more than one library owned a periodical, it was found that the actual holdings were different.

- The number of unique titles originally estimated was approximately 7,000-8,000. The actual number is closer to 12,000. A wealth of periodical holdings was available in the community.

- Response to the project by special library units was high. Of the 30 identifiable special library units in the county, 17 joined.

- Special libraries connected with religious institutions tended to be more difficult to identify and involve in the project than any other type of special library. Of the 11 special religious collections in the county, only 4 units joined. However, of these, we were able to estimate that 6 had severely limited staff, or more commonly no identifiable staff whatsoever.

- The manpower involved was not as great as originally envisioned. Once the format and methods were adequately explained, and adapted to each library's individual method of record keeping, entering the data on the forms was a simple matter. One of the largest special libraries in the county, after observing the volunteer working for a few hours, relieved her of her duties and finished compiling within a day.

The success of this project has, we feel, proven that union lists at local levels are feasible, given all the possible factors and problems, economic, social, political, and technical, if librarians are willing to expend the time. Funding is not the major factor involved, as we concluded in Axiom 3 - the willingness of the individuals in the area to participate is the crucial deciding point. A project must be supported professionally, or else it can not succeed.

Professional support, however, becomes a two-way street, enriching those who lend it. As the individual librarians become involved in cooperative projects, they start to communicate with each other. Special libraries become cognizant of resources which are readily available to them at a local level, and how they can take best advantage of them. Involvement in such projects becomes a learning process, so that as each individual puts in efforts to the project, s/he takes out a new awareness of what can be found and done locally.

The potentials for cooperation and better library service are great in any geographic area. Our project, a first attempt of its kind, is not perfect; but the old saying that " a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" holds very true. Our Axiom 1 cannot be stressed too highly. Now that we have taken the initial step towards interlibrary cooperation with serials, we can conceivable start on a variety of additional cooperative projects. We could create even better bibliographic tools; we could organize cooperative buying and sharing of serials, even storing, in order to prevent duplication and lower costs among the special libraries. We can now re-distribute demands among local libraries, relieving our already over-taxed larger state institutions. The possibilities of benefits from such a project are limitless: it is now up to the creativity of our professional imaginations.